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INFLUENCES OF CZECH CULTURE IN POLAND IN THE MIDDLE AGES

THE neighbour Slav peoples, Czechs and Poles came under Christian influence about the same time, the former in the 9th, the latter in the 10th, century—the relations of the two States were alternately friendly and the reverse right through the Middle Ages. King Boleslaw the Great, the first Polish imperialist, conquered both Bohemia and Moravia just after the year 1000 A.D. hoping to oppose a united Slav empire to the Roman (German) Empire. But the plan failed, thanks largely to German intervention, and the turn came of ambitious Czech kings to subject the Poland of that time for the same larger purpose. This plan was, in the long run, as hopeless as the former one; and the result was a growing mistrust between the leaders of the two peoples instead of any constructive policy of co-operation.

In the 12th century the mistrust and dislike felt by the Poles toward their fellow-Slavs is shown by the chronicles. The reason was partly the politics of King Svatopluk, but also the feeling that the Czechs had German interests behind them, and so were not free to enter on anything like an equal basis of understanding. This did not however, prevent intermarriage between the royal houses, or the Agreement of Merseburg of the 12th century. A long period of mutual good-will followed, but on this came the action of Wenceslas II, who, marrying a Polish princess, made himself King of Western Poland at the time of the Feudal partitions. Władisław changed this and reunited Poland in 1325. Then followed the struggles for Silesia, and the ceding of that land to the Czech crown ten years later. Again an improvement was evident in public relations, and Czech troops helped the Poles in their struggles with the Teutonic knights. But the emergence of the Hussite movement in Bohemia, and its slow infiltration into Poland, became a fresh source of troubles—on religious grounds. As a result the Poles did not give as much help to the Czechs in their fine effort to get clear of German influences as might have been expected. The Hussite movement threatened to divide Poland, and so was seen as a danger to the State. Hence a conflict of opinions, and the opposition of Cardinal Archbishop Oleswicks to the acceptance of the throne of Bohemia by King Wlad Jagiello. During the 15th century more than one effort made by the Czechs for closer union with Poland was shattered by the Church and by the nobility. When in 1471 a Jagiello at last became king in Prague, nothing constructive was done to consolidate the forces of union, and in 1526 the crown of Bohemia passed to the Habsburgs. Whether such a union would have been a useful solution of internal and international issues is a purely academic question today. In any case the opportunity was lost. Perhaps the Polish-Lithuanian union was in itself a barrier to a larger concept.¹

¹ This introduction is a resumé of Professor Kolbuszewski's longer account, which could not be printed as it stood, for reasons of space.—Ed.

I.

The share of the Czechs in the formation of Poland's spiritual tradition has often been dealt with, but exaggerated attention has been paid to details, and too little to essential problems. A thorough re-examination of the whole question is therefore much needed. Czech influences were actually making themselves felt strongly in Medieval Poland, but the Poles felt that they had not sufficient reasons for welcoming their Slav kinsmen, whose language was so similar to their own.

II.

In the times of more or less favourable political conditions cultural influences were now infiltrating, coming more copiously to Poland from over the south-western frontier. Undoubtedly the relations between Mieszko and Boleslaw of Bohemia were of a more intimate nature since the former married one of the latter's daughters. Contemporary research can only confirm what Zeissberg wrote: (*Dziejopisarstwo polskie Wieków Srednich*). "The fact that he, a pagan, could marry a Christian shows how great the influence of the Christian Faith and principles upon the prince and his surroundings must already have been." He turned Christian of his own will, converted either by Czech missionaries or by Germans, who were preaching in Bohemia and hence came to Poland. The lamentations of the first Bishop of Prague, a Saxon monk Detmar, who feared when dying, punishment from Heaven, because he had not fought enough with paganism, prove that Czechs themselves were opposed to the new faith. The bishop died in 982, i.e. sixteen years after Mieszko's conversion. We may therefore conclude that Czech clergy were few in the 10th century. Would they, then, be sent to preach the Gospel in a foreign country? One or two might have come along to Poland with Sobiebor, St. Wojciech's brother who sought refuge at Boleslaw's side; or with St. Wojciech who found shelter there when escaping from Boleslaw II of Bohemia. The main point of interest is not who converted Mieszko, but that he turned Christian of his own free will, and not under compulsion.

The German missionaries who had already preached the Gospel in Bohemia must have had some knowledge of Czech, which could have been used successfully among the early Poles. They brought along a new Christian terminology, but they could not have introduced it everywhere in Poland any more than they could have converted the whole country at once. Whole decades passed before paganism was dispelled, and the new religious vocabulary was slowly absorbed and its range widened by degrees. When the Church in Poland got rid of the official supremacy of the German Church, German clergy gave way more and more to others, viz. to Poles as well as Italians and Frenchmen: particularly from the 12th century, when Frenchmen were to be found even among the bishops. The clergy of the two latter

nationalities also contributed to the formation and enrichment of the Polish Church vocabulary. But we must not forget, above all, that Latin was the language of the Church, that the schools were Latin and that therefore, church terms were introduced straight from the Latin into Polish, which transformed them in its own specific way. So, when examining the church vocabulary, we cannot define the source of a word by taking into account only a resemblance of sound between the Polish and Czech forms. Many historical and cultural circumstances influenced its creation and development. Czech clergy, of course, had also a share in this—we know for instance that Queen Kinga's confessor was a Czech. The Czechs did not create a new Christian vocabulary but appropriated Latin words, already modified by German missionaries, and slavonicised them. Czecho-Polish resemblances do not seem to prove much, for the Poles could have formed ecclesiastical terms following Slavonic rules of language as well as Czech, and quite independently.

Foreign scholars have been found much more cautious than Polish in estimating Czech influences upon Polish (e.g. Miklosich: *Christliche Terminologie der slavischen Sprachen*; Berneker: *Slavisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*). Among Poles, Klich of the university of Poznań allowed Czech influence the largest share in the formation of the Polish Church vocabulary in his *O Polskiej terminologii chrześcijankiej*: attributing to Czech mediation as much as 54 words out of 70—with a clause, however, that “not all of them are of obviously Czech character.” Yet in the same work he states most rightly that “certainly even in the remotest times some Christian terms might have arisen spontaneously.” We can refuse to believe in the Czech source of those words about which Klich himself is not quite certain, and the Czech origin of which seems doubtful, and not approved by other linguists: e.g. words derived from other sources in Brückner's *Słownik Etymologiczny*. Examples are *cementarz*—Lat. cimeterium, *diabeł*—Lat. diabolus, *dziekan*—Lat. decanus, *kacierz*—German Katzer, *Kielich*—Lat. calix, Germ. Kelch, *krzyż*—Lat. crux, *oltarz*—Lat. altare, Germ. altaar, *szatan*—Lat. satan, *przeor*—Lat. prior, *sobota*—Lt. sabbata, *żyd*—from the romanised Judaeus. How dangerous it is to draw purely philological conclusions without taking into account the complexity of historical and cultural phenomena, may be seen, e.g. from the word “*Koldza*.” Klich claimed that the word was formed through Czech, but Dobrzycki has refuted this claim decisively in his *Kolczy Polskie a Czeskie*. What is said there about this word may be applied to a great many others seemingly of Czech origin. “If it is true that Poles who were far away from the Latin part of Christian Europe took this word through neighbours, it must be borne in mind that their land also bordered on that of Christian Germany. Words did not pass from people to people but through the Church and the clergy. In this case it might equally have been introduced into Poland by German priests

or those of other nationalities. There are many traces of relations with Italy, France and the lands of the future Belgium."

Czech has certainly had a share in the formation of the Polish vocabulary, for words of Czech production were scattered in the Polish language during the Middle Ages and even in the first stage of the Renaissance. But some Czechisms were of short duration, and were ousted by words more deeply rooted in everyday speech. Purely Czech abstract terms also, like *postata* and others, brought thither by theologians from Prague, quickly disappeared. They were expelled by the use of Latin and by the anti-Hus reaction.

The Polish language was subjected to Czech influence chiefly by way of those Polish territories which Czechs had taken, e.g. Silesia. There Czech was actually being introduced in the 14th century, for the Silesian princes were directly drawn into the Czech sphere of influence. They were at first vassals of the Luxembourgs, and later on politically dependent on them. From thence some linguistic features characteristic of Czech might have filtered further into Poland. Again, Czech administration might have left some traces in the language in the part of the country conquered by King Wenceslas of Bohemia; in those times the very name "Wacław" (Czech: Vaclav) took the place (according to Brückner) of "Wizław." Linguistic relations between Poles and Czechs were active chiefly in the border districts; and some Czech characteristics exist side by side with Polish in the dialect of that region even today. This has been shown by K. Nitsch of the University of Cracow in his *Gramatyka Języka Polskiego*.

From the end of the 14th century onwards—even in the 16th—a knowledge of Czech was widespread, and was secured by the pilgrimages to shrines in Prague and by Czech religious workers. Some noblemen of Lesser Poland used it because they considered it fashionable, and even Lukas Gornicki had still to complain of and censure the use of Czech words instead of Polish. The former were supposed to be more graceful, but were in fact "squeaky and not befitting a man." This is a symptom of the protest against Czech traces, which had already disappeared in other fields. Only here and there someone who, like Rej, frequented the courts and wished to speak pompously, went so far as to use expressions like *zamułki*, *kohuty*, *złatohlavy*—but these too were being forgotten.

The stamp impressed by Czech upon Polish words of purely Slavonic origin was very slight; more important is its rôle as an intermediary between Latin and Polish, or in introducing German words in an already slavified form, e.g. "berło" from "berla"—Lat. *ferula*. In this case too there is some doubt whether the Poles themselves did not alter the German word in the Slavonic manner. It seems to me that Mickiewicz hit on the best answer to this linguistic question in his Paris lectures: "Czech influenced the formation of the outward aspect of the Polish tongue, rather than its intrinsic nature."

In the progress of western civilisation in Poland, Bohemia served as one of the links. Whilst some elements of medieval culture in general came to Poland straight from Germany, Flanders, France and Italy, others were taking a roundabout way via Bohemia, e.g. certain features of social life, or of military organisation. Already in the 10th century Czechs were employed in State administration, and in the King's chancery. Some of them reached Poland through Silesia, which had been earlier subjected to Czech influence, some were relics of the Czech occupation. One item would be brought in by a student, another novelty introduced by some Czech visiting the country.

Art critics often hesitate when dealing with the problem of Czech influence upon Polish art. Was the old Romanesque Church on the Wawel inspired by German or Czech art? Its plan calls to mind German churches as well as the plan of the Cathedral of St. Vitus in Prague. Some marked points of resemblance may be noticed however; e.g. St. Prokop's Rotunda in Stradno which belongs to the 12th century corresponds to analogous buildings in Bohemia. Then the collegiate church in Tum near Łęczyca, from the 14th century betrays, besides Flemish and Italian influences, some Czecho-German affinities. The illustrations in the Gospels of the 14th century are of Czech origin. Monuments of art happily preserved prove nevertheless that Czech influences ought not to be overestimated; until the middle of the 14th century they were confined to single, minor examples. Some things, e.g. Gospels, were produced in Bohemia and then imported to Poland, but in the works of art created in Poland Czech influences were overshadowed by those of other artistic centres—German, French or Flemish, as for instance in the door of the Cathedral in Gnieźno.

An extension of Czech influence may be observed from the second half of the 14th century to the beginning of the 15th. Relations between Poland and Bohemia became closer during this period, when the Czechs were trying to relieve themselves of the one-sided influence of Germany. Pilgrimages to shrines became more frequent, and with them went the importing of Czech holy pictures and illuminated Bibles. Czech manuscripts, illuminated after the French manner and style, exerted an influence upon the technique and character of Polish. Church carvings in wood and stone showed Czech as well as German affinities. Altar and wall paintings betrayed not only an artistic tendency typical of Italian and French origins but also the influence of a characteristic transformation of Western *motifs* in the Czech way. So too Flemish painting reached Poland via Germany and Bohemia. In architecture traces of Czech art are rare and never exist alone. They appear only in company with other Western elements and are for the most part confined to details, never affecting the type of building itself. As an example, we have Czech influence in the ornamentation of St. John's Church in Gnieźno belonging to the 14th century. The artistic culture of the West and South of Europe came to Poland by one of two ways:

either straight from its original country or via Bohemia and Hungary. In the latter case it was first absorbed by these intermediaries, so that it reached Poland with characteristic modifications.

From the second half of the 14th century, with the rise of her spiritual and material culture, Poland reached out more and more boldly, for the gains of Western Europe, and, thanks to an improvement in political relations between her and Bohemia, turned her attention also towards Prague. Casimir the Great himself visited that city and perhaps found there inspiration for his State reforms and for the foundation of Cracow University, in 1364. Life in Prague, smart and on a European level, must have pleased the King, who had already as a young man been subjected—when staying with his sister, Queen Elizabeth of Hungary—to the influence of a court which imitated that of Naples. Many Poles studied in Prague, grouped in the “*natio Polonorum*,” others sought instruction in their own Alma Mater of Cracow, still others went for learning to Italy. Later, in spite of the decline of Prague University, a certain pro-Czech tendency of the Polish Court was responsible for the foundation in 1397 of a Collegium Hierosolimitanum in Prague for future Lithuanian priests, and in 1411 of a Collegium Polonorum. Toward the end of the 15th century, when Prague University sank lower and lower, the centre of culture and science moved to Poland, thanks to the young men—some of them eminent—who had studied there, obtained degrees and actually became recognised as world scholars. The same rôle was played by learned Czechs and Germans from Prague, who were invited to Cracow. Among the Polish promoters of science who studied in Prague were Stanislaus of Skalmierz, lawyer and theologian, first “*rector*” of the University; Andrew of Kolorzyn, theologian; and Nicholas Kozłowski, preacher (all of them lecturers of Cracow University, and in opposition to Hus): further, Paul Włodkowic and his friend Andrew of Goślawice, Matthew of Cracow, theologian in Cracow and Heidelberg, Martin of Zorawica, astronomer, and Stanislaus Ciołek, bishop and Lord Privy Seal. James of Paradyż again was a pupil of the Czech Cistercians. Not all of them were satisfied with Czech learning. Some went on to complete their education in Italy, as for instance Włodkowic or Martin of Zorawica; others to Paris, like Stanislaus of Skalmierz; still others, like Andrew of Kokorzyn and James of Paradyż continued their studies in Cracow.

“*Hospites de Bohemia*,” visiting Poland, were entertained particularly at the court of Jagiełło. John Szczekna, Queen Jadwiga’s confessor, in his will left his library to Cracow University. Jerome of Prague, an opponent of Hus, became the King’s confessor and preacher at the royal court. He was for a short time Abbot of the monastery at Sicz; but he then went to Italy and became a Cameldulensian. The other Jerome of Prague, the Hussite, preached in Poland for a short time. The university of Prague provided Cracow with her first lecturers, mostly

Poles, who had studied and then lectured in Prague. From that town too "were brought at the same time to Cracow various medieval manuscripts, which supplied the lecturers with knowledge, and thus exerted a marked influence upon the development of science in the country and in the Jagiellonian School." They consisted of theological, philosophical and astronomical treatises, some of them basic books on medieval science, some the lectures of Prague professors. In this way Czech learning formed one of the factors shaping the intellectual aspect of medieval Poland. This influence was of short duration but it was strong; and at the end of the 14th century and early in the 15th, it was perhaps more intense than that of other Western countries.

One fact, however, must not escape our notice. From among the makers of Polish culture of the 15th century only a part studied in Prague, and on the other hand, the most eminent ones did not come under its influence. Długosz, Ostrorog, Wojciech of Brudzewo and John of Stobnica as well as Paul Włodkowic and Martin of Żorawica owed most to Italy.

When soon afterwards the Hussite movement made its way into Southern and Western Poland, opposition arose almost immediately. For a while the new teaching gained favour with some magnates, with many of the gentry, some of the clergy, the petty townswomen and even among the officers of the King. It also penetrated for a short time into the University of Cracow; but its character was more political and social than religious and theological. The Church and, shortly afterwards, the State took up a hostile attitude towards the Hussites, and the nobility followed their example. The University, led by scholars—pupils of the Prague school, among them anti-Hussite Czechs—put out against them a flood of treatises; and the only service the Hussite movement did to Polish learning was that it turned its attention in a new direction. Witness the work of Stanislaus of Skalmierz *Determinatio contra sectatores*. Apart from that it left no lasting impression and its influence was easily swept away. As it was possible to exterminate propagandist pamphlets so radically that, except for the sermons of a Polish Hussite not a scrap of them has been preserved, it is difficult to attribute much vigour to treatises which in no way contributed to enrich Polish letters of the 14th century. Gałka's poem about Wyclif has no connection with the Hussite movement, except that it is a eulogy of the spiritual father of Hus's doctrine, and that the form of the poem reminds us of the Hussite hymns. Not one of Gałka's preserved works ever mentions Hus.

It was only an offshoot of the Bohemian religious movement which lent to the Polish group of dissenters some of its characteristics. Some of the "Bohemian Brethren" expelled by Ferdinand Habsburg came to Great Poland in 1548, settled at the courts of magnates—the Ostrorogs, Gorkas, Krotoskis and Leszczyńskis—and founded at Szamotuły and at Leszno printing presses for their pamphlets. The Diet of 1555 granted

them freedom of religion. The Sandomierz Agreement put them on the same footing as other creeds; but their own strength ebbed with years, and they did not enrich Polish thought either then or in the 17th century when a new wave of the Brethren came to Poland. Weakened by internal dissensions, they were fused with the Lutherans, and by the 18th century they were only a handful. These Brethren were, together with the Italian anti-trinitarians and the German and Dutch Anabaptists, the origin of the Polish Brethren called "Arians." Their influence may be seen not so much in doctrine as in their mode of living, and especially in their rules against holding offices, or carrying arms: further in the simplicity of their clothes and in their shunning of entertainments.

Medieval Poland turned all her forces to the deepening of her intellect: in youthful ambition she strove to catch up with Western Europe, and actually her hope was realised in fact. Polish learning flourished, and produced many a scholar of European standard. Important achievements were attained in the fields of historiography, scholastic theology and philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, law and political science. Poland was not yet attracted by the beautiful, for she was not aware of it, did not feel it, and did not want it. She was not seeking masterpieces of Western Europe, but showed an interest in the poetry concerned with everyday problems and in practical needs, such as religion. Not only poetry but the whole of literature written in Polish was dictated by topical necessities.

What was the share of Bohemia in the rise of this literature? Historians differ in their opinions about literary events in Medieval Poland and Bohemia, and in their estimates of their relations. This may be clearly seen in the works of the four most eminent students of the problem. Stephen Wierczynski, in dealing with the relation of Czech medieval writings to those of Poland, refrained from pronouncing any opinion on the general relation between the two literatures in that period, although he emphasised Czech influence on some works. Kazimierz Kolbuszewski has concentrated upon one side of the problem—the rôle of the Hussite movement in Poland. Alexander Brückner, who in 1904 stipulated, when mentioning Czech traces in some old Polish monuments, that "we could not possibly draw general conclusions out of single or even a few works," thirty years later wrote in his *Dzieje Kultury Polskiej* a very extreme generalisation: "Polish literature was tied to the apron-strings of Czech literature." On the other hand Stanisław Dobrzycki, although, contrary to Brückner, he traces the origin of several Polish writings to Czech sources, did not overrate Czech influence at all. Thus, when stating resemblances between Polish and Czech carols he observes that "we cannot yet speak here of the one as being dependent upon the other, for resemblances are originated in the common literary atmosphere of Europe." He states that in the relations between Poland and Bohemia there was absolutely no "strong

and broad influence such as might result in the production of a number of literary works and relationships likely to give a distinctive colouring to the whole literature."

III.

When considering Polish medieval literature in its relation to Czech, we must discriminate between two periods of which the division falls at about 1500.

In the preserved specimens of writing up to the end of the 14th century, Czech echoes are very slight, and exclusively of a linguistic character. They never show the Czech text as the only source in the creation of a Polish work. Thus one of the translators of the Florian Psalter found it hard to put into Polish the Latin wording of the Vulgate, because of terms and phrases which he was incapable of rendering into his native tongue. He therefore sought a translation in a language easily understood and, making use of the Czech version, patched up the blanks in his work by scattering Czechisms here and there in the Polish text. He also altered the spelling in the Czech way, proceeding not at all like his predecessor who rendered from Latin into Polish the first hundred psalms more independently.

When in the second half of the 14th century a certain priest set about copying the sermons of Święty Krzyż (the monastery of St. Cross), written several decades earlier by another priest from Central Poland, he partly copied and partly modernised the language and spelling. Nitsch claims in the preface to his 1934 edition of the Sermons that the only definite Czechism he found in them is the letter "e" in participles (orgarnienego, poroznzenego and nikomemu). The text itself, of course, is not sufficient to explain the origin of the fact. There may be two reasons: either the copyist spoke Polish with a Czech accent, a Prague student, one of those who brought in a new fashion, and whom two centuries later Górnicki made fun of, shocked that "the court admired the language of those using the most Czech expressions;" or, which is more doubtful, the author of the Sermons had acquired some Czech peculiarities of speech during the invasion of Wenceslas or afterwards.

The third work which has some Czechisms in one of the 14th century copies is *Godzinki o męce Polskiej* from the Latin *Horæ canonicæ Salvatoris*. The fact that other copies from the same century are free from Czechisms proves that a Czech copyist introduced them into this one.

Till the end of the century, therefore, only the faintest traces of Czech influence can be found in Polish manuscripts. We cannot speak of literary bonds with Bohemia, for no relations of the kind were entertained with any other nation. Nor are we entitled to speak of the beginning of a pro-Czech orientation in Polish culture, because one or another writer makes use of Czech texts on finding the language easy to understand, but not for deeper cultural reasons.

Near the end of the 14th century the case was different; the dependence of Polish works upon Czech ones is shown in many ways:—

1. We have translations and adaptations of Czech original works—almost all of them religious hymns and poems. There are two carols, the Czech origin of which was proved by Dobrzycki; “Zdrów bądź Królu anielski” and “Stałać się rzecz wielmi dziwna.” The song “Witaj miły Jezu Kryste” and some hymns from the lost psalm-book of Przeworszczyk (1435) published by Juszyński, repeat the Czech text and betray a strong Czech influence in the language. The hymn about St. Dorothea, a despicable adaptation, is full of Czech traces in its language, syntax and spelling. Among lay verses there is the erotic “Ah miły Boże, toć boli,” and among prose works the sermons of Matthew of Grochów are based on Czech sources.

2. The second group contains translations and adaptations of Latin and other writings contrived with the help of the Czech version. Thus the *Puławy Psalter* with Czechisms in syntax and language, and “The Vision of St. Bridget”; both being—as proved by Brückner—translated from Czech manuscripts. *Queen Sophie’s Bible* might be included too. It is Andrew of Jaszowice’s adaptation of the Latin Vulgate, made with the help of various Czech texts and it is full of Czechisms. Among hymns “Zdrowa Bądź najświętsza Królowno” is written from the Czech translation of “Ave pulcherrima regina.” The hypothesis that the Latin hymn “Deus omnipotens” was rendered into Polish “Bóg Wszchemogący wstał z martwych żądający” with the assistance of the Czech translation is very weak, for it is based on the word “żądający”—Czech *žaduci*. Lastly several “moralist decalogues” and some “cisioids” (medieval rhymed calendars) came to Poland from Germany via Bohemia.

3. The third group consists of Polish original writings but with Czech inspiration, such as the sermons of the so-called “Polish Hussite” and Parkosz’s treatise on spelling—after that made by Hus. Perhaps too the Czech Wyclifite movement was the source of Gałka’s song about Wyclif.

4. The fourth group consists of works very loosely connected with Bohemia, and only by the fact that some manuscripts were copied by Czechs. This is obvious from peculiarities of spelling. We have *The Prayer Book of Sister Constance*, *The Prayer Book of Nawójka* and some 15th century copies of the Lord’s Prayer, Ave Maria and the Credo. I should also add the song “Nas wszech nadziejo przemiała” (Brückner reads “Nasze nadziejo przemiała”), which has some Czech words or samples of Czech spelling interwoven with pure Polish. “Utyecha, utyessenie, tyessys” betray Czech spelling but do not affect the pronunciation. The same applies to “radost, milost, swatost,” to “darcze” instead of “dawcze,” while “schrana pożechnana, czystoty” are definite Czechisms. These examples tend to show that the copyist was a Czech.

We cannot overlook several doubtful items. According to Dobrzycki the songs "Jezuse Judasz sprzedał" and "Skarga umierającego" are adaptations from the Czech. Brückner pointed out that the Polish texts are older than the Czech ones. "Skarga umierającego" seems to belong to that class of Polish original writings which are bound by their subject-matter to the stock of themes common to all Europe in the Middle Ages and have analogies in Czech literature. They speak, therefore, not of an influence, but of a literary atmosphere common to the two countries, and to the West. This general atmosphere is evident, e.g. in Polish and Czech love letters and erotic poems conceived after the Western fashion, as Słota's poem about table manners, "Rozmowa mistrza ze śmiercią" or in the little poem "Dusza z ciała wyleciała." The same kind of writing was to be found in the Middle Ages in Latin, Italian, French and German literatures as well as in Czech, and the Polish examples are not at all dependent upon the Czech works. There is nothing to prove the Czech origin of the song "Wesoły nam dzień nastał" from the Latin "O quam felix hæc dies" which has several different versions in Polish.

In the meagre Polish literature of the Middle Ages traces of Czech influence are likewise slight: in the 15th century there are still linguistic traces, conscious borrowings, and the casual insertion of Czechisms by copyists. In several cases, however, works that were mainly religious (very few original ones, few too of a universal European character) reached Poland through Bohemia. They therefore broadened the scope of that kind of literature which was most carefully cultivated in medieval times, but they did not bring the best things Bohemia produced, e.g. the legend of St. Catherine echoing the songs of the troubadours and minnesingers. Only one about St. Dorothea crept in, in a careless and clumsy presentation. Poland had no artistic aims in turning to Bohemia, having as yet no literary aspirations. It was purely religious or practical motives that made Poles take Czech writings as the basis of their own works. It was so with religious hymns, with the psalter, the Bible, and the *cisioians*. Now in those times, Bohemia had, when compared with Poland, a very rich secular literature, epic romances of chivalry, lyrical love poetry imitating the German; and tales, the best of which was *Smila Nova Rada*, and imaginative writings. Of all this medieval Poland knew nothing, which shows that the connection between Poland and Bohemia was one-sided, limited mainly to religious matters. One of the reasons lay in the fact that the Polish clergy studied in Prague. The interest was mostly in religion, as in the case of the student who praised Waldhauser's sermons. Among others the *Postilla* of Milić was read in Poland; but there was no intimate contact in the literary sphere, and there were no closer relations between Polish and Czech educated laymen. Existing connections were not only limited to certain subjects but also to certain areas, viz. those near the Czecho-Polish frontier, Silesia and the district of Cracow.

Furthermore, how scarce Czech influences were, and how narrow their range, may be seen from the striking fact that most of the medieval works in Polish were created quite independently of Czech literature or of any Czech influence. Examples are the great Bogarodzica, the legend of St. Alexis, the conversation between the Master and Death, almost all hymns to the Virgin—only two had Czech influence; and also, save for the few mentioned, all Christmas carols, Lent and Easter hymns, the song about Tęczński, the song by a citizen of Sandomierz, the Complaint against the peasants and the Satire on the clergy, etc., Czech influences did not affect secular matters. They crept into religious subjects, but inspired only trifles. Works in Czech helped in the creation of more important items, such as the Puławy Psalter and the Bible, only in the rôle of a linguistic auxiliary.

If we put together Polish medieval works—those which are somehow connected with Czech literature and influence, and those which are free from them—and if then we removed the former, the Polish literature of the Middle Ages would not lose at all its distinctive character. Its appearance would not change fundamentally. The Święty Krzyż Sermons are not of Czech inspiration; and Queen Sophia's Bible and the Puławy Psalter are translated from the Latin Vulgate, although with the help of the Czech text.

As regards literary culture, medieval Bohemia did not even serve as a link between Poland and the West, did not leave any mark on it; and it roused no interest for European literary questions. Poland attained her literary culture, a very modest one, it is true, and still primitive when compared with that of Germany, France or Italy, through a direct contact with Western Europe. At first it was revealed mainly in Latin writings, but little by little in Polish works as well.

Why then did Poland make so little use of Czech sources on her way to spiritual growth and achievements?

As long as Bohemia was a cultural and political province of Germany, Poland stood aloof from her. Hostile political relations up to the middle of the 14th century did not permit any closer contact, but created an atmosphere of mistrust and dislike towards a nation which had attacked Polish Western territories unawares, and which was at bottom a German fief. Poland, also subject to Teutonic invasions, defended herself with arms, but sought relations rather with Latin countries, beyond Germany. Nothing attracted her in German culture, and the inherent Polish nonchalance was favourable to this mistrust. In spite of it, however, Czech influences did penetrate into everyday life, i.e. into the army, the civil service, the language and also into art. But they are only rare and unimportant examples, a fact which is striking when one considers the influences of other countries visible in the field of fine arts.

When new elements, the French and Italian, broadened the range of Czech culture in the times of Charles IV, a second period of livelier

intellectual relations, chiefly in the religious sphere, began. Poles studied in Prague, Czechs visited Poland, original religious works, or more often, works translated from other tongues into Czech were made use of in preparing Polish versions. Some Czech influences could be seen in the plastic arts and in the language. These phenomena appeared roughly between 1380 and 1410 and correspond, in a characteristic way, to a period of friendly political relations. Yet even then Bohemia did not give Poland what she could have given. Her culture was fairly well developed, but its influence was limited to a certain section of the spiritual life and to certain territories. Did the reasons lie in the indifference of the Poles towards wider cultural problems, or in the inability of the Czechs to expand their culture—or in both? It is difficult to decide, and the question is anyhow of a secondary importance. In this period of the strongest (in comparison with other times) influx of Czech culture into Poland, Bohemia was an intermediary between her neighbour and Western European culture. Yet these influences upon the Polish nation were neither lasting nor strong enough to penetrate to the foundation of civilisation. They could not leave a specific stamp upon its character, or serve as an educating factor in Polish life. Later, from the time of the Hussite wars till the middle of the 16th century, Czech influence became limited in a very marked degree. In spite of satisfactory and sometimes very close connections, the range and the intensity of Czech influences tended to weaken. At first, the impetus with which the Hussite movement attacked Poland broke through Polish cultural defences, and the movement gained some standing in the country. On its political side, the advantages Poland would obtain by a union with Bohemia found for a while supporters at the royal court. Soon afterwards, however, an anti-Hussite tendency won the field, set the majority of the people against the movement, and drove out of Poland this first and only independent element of Czech culture. Later, it is true, certain seeds of Hussite sowing fell on religious ground in Poland. The Bohemian Brethren exerted an influence upon the Polish Brethren; but after that time Poland grew more and more remote from and indifferent to Czech problems, and the influence of Bohemia faded. This influence, always slight, is of interest only to the specialists, notably to philologists.

Dobrzycki reminds us that, although the number of Protestant hymns translated in the 16th century from the psalm-book of the Bohemian Brethren was relatively large (thirty-one in all), these hymns were of little significance and the translations were poor. They were useful from the point of view of the Reformation, but meant nothing to Polish literature. They did not reach beyond the Protestant field of action, and they played no rôle in Catholic hymnology. They expressed the workings of one religious circle upon another, but had no general cultural importance. Julian Krzyżanowski, in his monograph on Polish romances of the 16th century, shows that the number of romances

translated with the help of Czech texts was very small. The translator of *Magielona* knew the Czech version of 1565 but he knew also the German translation. One of the editions of "Roman Stories" had Czechisms unknown to the other two editions, and the *Historia o Królu Greckim* translated from the Czech shows that the translator did not understand the Czech text, and misinterpreted it. *Historia w Landzie* was current in both Polish and Czech popular tradition, but the Polish tale is quite independent of the Czech. Yet *Fortuny i cnoty różności* is a translation from a Czech work, and the vocabulary of the translator of *Æsop's Life* is full of Czechisms. Thus, during several decades of Polish romances, only in a few cases did the translator make use of Czech versions. Only a few people, and those the less educated, availed themselves of Czech translations instead of the originals. We have a sample in Martin Bielski's *Lives of Philosophers* or when he used the chronicle of Hajek in writing his own, or when people employed Czech originals as did the Maleccy and Valentine of Brzozowo. These Czech elements were overwhelmed by the culture of the Renaissance flowing then into Poland and became absorbed in it, almost without leaving any trace.

Poland and Bohemia differed greatly in the way they accepted Western influences in the Middle Ages. For centuries Bohemia submitted herself one-sidedly to an invasion of Germanic culture, and only from the middle of the 14th century, and only for about fifty years, appropriated to herself the cultural achievements of France and Italy. Poland, on the other hand, preserved her national character through a Slavonic conservatism, showing no zest for the achievements of other nations. She was engaged instead in a steady, sometimes sluggish strengthening of her political basis, and of her constitution, absorbing and assimilating foreign elements, German burghers in the towns and fellow-Slavs on the Eastern borders. With her attention concentrated on this task, she was not able to catch up with the culture of the West. She did not accept ready-made values from her neighbours, but proceeded step by step, seeking her spiritual *pabulum* from a variety of sources.

Medieval Bohemia quickly attained to Western European standards of civilisation, having absorbed almost the whole of medieval culture through Germany. In the 15th century, however, the Czechs had to gather all their forces to get rid of this (from the point of view of national purity), foreign "filthy crust," which was stifling their national life. While Bohemia exhausted her energy in the revolution and was no longer able to continue her independent creative activity, Poland had strengthened both her political foundations and the framework of her civilisation; and, in the 16th century, could turn to the shaping of her own culture.

The ways of Poland and Bohemia, united for a while in the 15th century, began to part, almost for good. The influence of Czech culture

upon Poland ceased completely. In the following periods we may detect a coldness, a growing indifference as regards Czech spiritual culture; and the slightly closer relations in the 19th century were founded upon a new basis—the Slavophil movement. The indifference of the whole nation, and the lack of mutual relations in the cultural sphere were not likely to be altered much by the few Polish references to Bohemia which appeared here and there, such as the volume on the Bohemian Brethren; *De ecclesiastica disciplina moribusque fratrum Bohemorum* (1660), the lost work of John Lasicki, published however in Amsterdam. Later, in the 19th century, when the Poles were together with the Czechs under Austrian domination and met on political grounds, the former acquired some knowledge of Czech political life, which spread to the other parts of dismembered Poland through the newspapers. During the partition period we may observe sporadic reviews of Czech literary life in Polish periodicals, works on their literature, e.g. Victor Czajewski's *Historia Literatury Czeskiej*, 1886, or the references to Czech Byronists in Zdzieckowski's *Byron i jego wiek*. Czech novels were translated (Jirešek, Nemcowa, Světla) sometimes scientific works or poetry—Čech, Halek, Brezina, Černy, Macha, Knasnohorska, Neruda, or the excellent translations of Vrchlicki and Zeyer by Miriam. However, these and similar literary events, in comparison with analogous relations with other cultures, had no influence upon the character of Polish literature and culture. They had no share in its shaping, they did not promote any solid and deeper knowledge of Czech cultural life, or of the literary activity of Bohemia. The Czech *Warwas* might prove that the works of Rej were translated too. Some Polish carols were rendered into Czech. There is no influence, either, of Polish literature upon Czech letters till the 19th century. The change of attitude that came near the end of the 18th century was due to the Slavophil movement and to the importance of the Polish literature of that time.

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